

GEORGE MARTIN OTTINGER

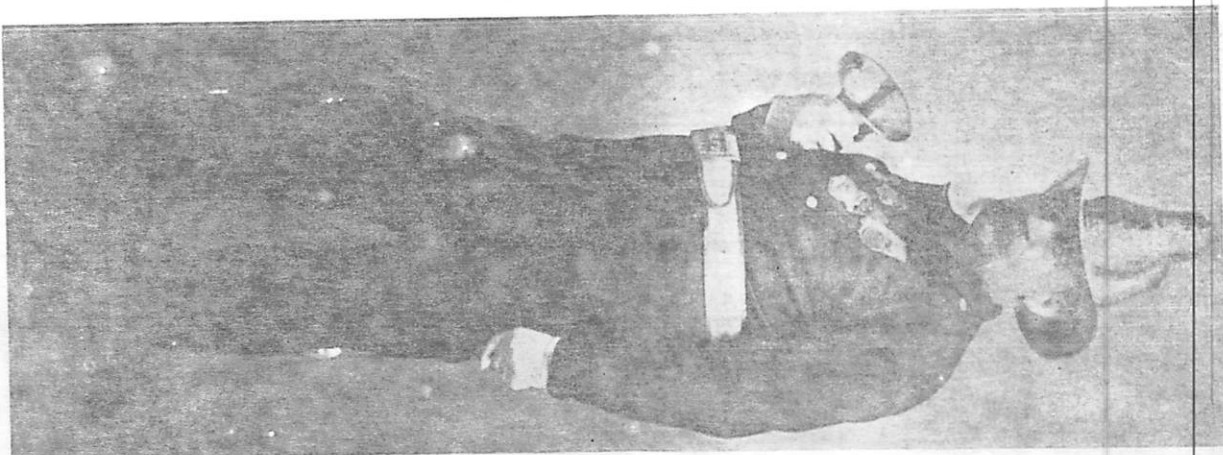
Chief of the Salt Lake Fire Department from 1871 to 1890

If you visit the Ottinger Hall and spend a short time in looking over their relics and records you will know why the Veteran Volunteer Firemen so greatly appreciated the services George Martin Ottinger rendered the Salt Lake Fire Department from 1871 to 1890.

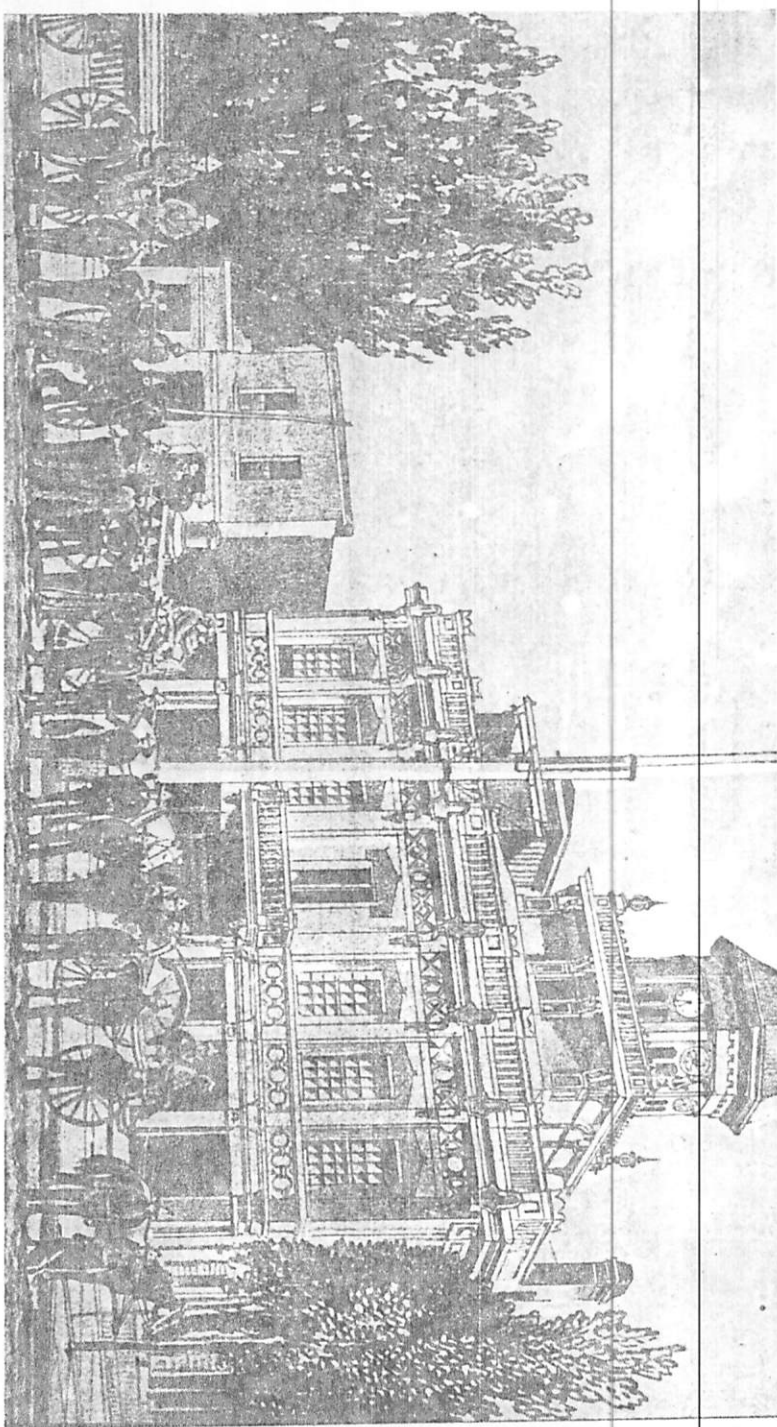
Their former home was located on Brigham Street, now South Temple Street, east of Fourth East Street. It faced the north and was next to Guivers Meat Market, a little, low, one-story building just large enough to house their meager equipment, and crowded in "the boys" as they gathered to "spin yarns" and talk it over after the excitement of a fire.

The spirit of unity and helpfulness was characteristic of their organization. Their motto "We Aim to Aid and Work to Save" was ever in their minds and governed their actions. Throughout the excitement, in the thick of the smoke and the heat of the flames, you could hear Chief Ottinger's encouraging voice as he shouted through his silver horn such requests as "Come on, boys!", "Turn on more water!", "A ladder here!", "A hatchet there!", "Back up the interfering crowd." Everyone went to the fire, and oftentimes the interested, anxious crowd was harder to fight than the fire.

George Martin Ottinger came from Philadelphia to Utah in 1861. He had had previous experience in fire fighting while living in New York and Baltimore. Soon after arriving here he joined a "Grab a bucket, hatchet and torch (for night fire fighting) and run" organization. He served under the leadership of Chief Jesse C. Little, as assistant engineer to Chief Engineer John D. T. McAllister, from 1871 to 1876.



George Martin Ottinger



Salt Lake City Fire Department

Mayor George W. Luft, Councilman Joseph W. Lee, Richard Kemp, Lew Ward, and August Peterson, met together while the ruins were still smoking and decided to send to Salt Lake City and to the mine owners for aid. The people of Salt Lake City responded immediately, sending a train of food, bedding and furniture. Very little personal suffering was felt, as everyone living out of the business district, whose residence was not destroyed, provided meals and other relief.

An incident will show the intensity of the heat during the fire. One of the hose lines was connected with a hydrant in front of a brick store and bank. It was decided to remove the hose to use the water where it was needed more. As I was Chairman of the City Fire and Water Committee, I was chosen to attempt it. A blanket was thrown over me and a full stream of water was turned upon me. The heat was so intense that the blanket was burned off me, so it was impossible to turn off the water.

After the sinking, February 1898, of the "Maine" (Spanish-American War), I was ordered to offer to Governor Heber M. Wells, the full membership of the department as volunteers. April 23, 1898, Captain Orin Grow, of the Utah National Guard, was sent to Mercur. Nearly every member of the Fire Department signed as volunteers. After May 1, 1898, when Admiral Dewey won a great victory at Manila, thousands of young men from all over the state offered their services.—William Waterfall.

When They Ran with the Old Machine

Brave relics of the past are we—
Old firemen staunch and true,
We are thinking now of the days gone by
And all that we have gone through.
Through fire and flame they made their way
And dangers we have seen,
We never can forget the time
When we ran with the old machine.

No rival could approach us then
In valor or in speed,
And often we have taken part
In many daring deed.
The fire bell was a bugle cry
That brought us to the scene
When lives were saved and dangers braved
When we ran with the old machine.

In numbers now we are but few,
A host have passed away,
But still we are happy, light and free—
Our spirits ne'er decay.
We often sigh for those old days,
Whose memory we kept green,
Oh, there was joy for man and boy
When we ran with the old machine.

—Author Unknown.